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ANNUAL CONVENTION

OF THE

PSI UPSILON FRATERNITY,

HELD AT SCHENECTADY, N. Y.,

JULY 27, 1852.

BY

HOOPER C. VAN VORST.

CAMBRIDGE:

METCALF AND COMPANY,

PRINTERS TO THE UNIVERSITY.

1853.

ORATION

BEFORE THE

CHAPTERS

OF THE

PSI UPSILON FRATERNITY,

ASSEMBLED IN CONVENTION

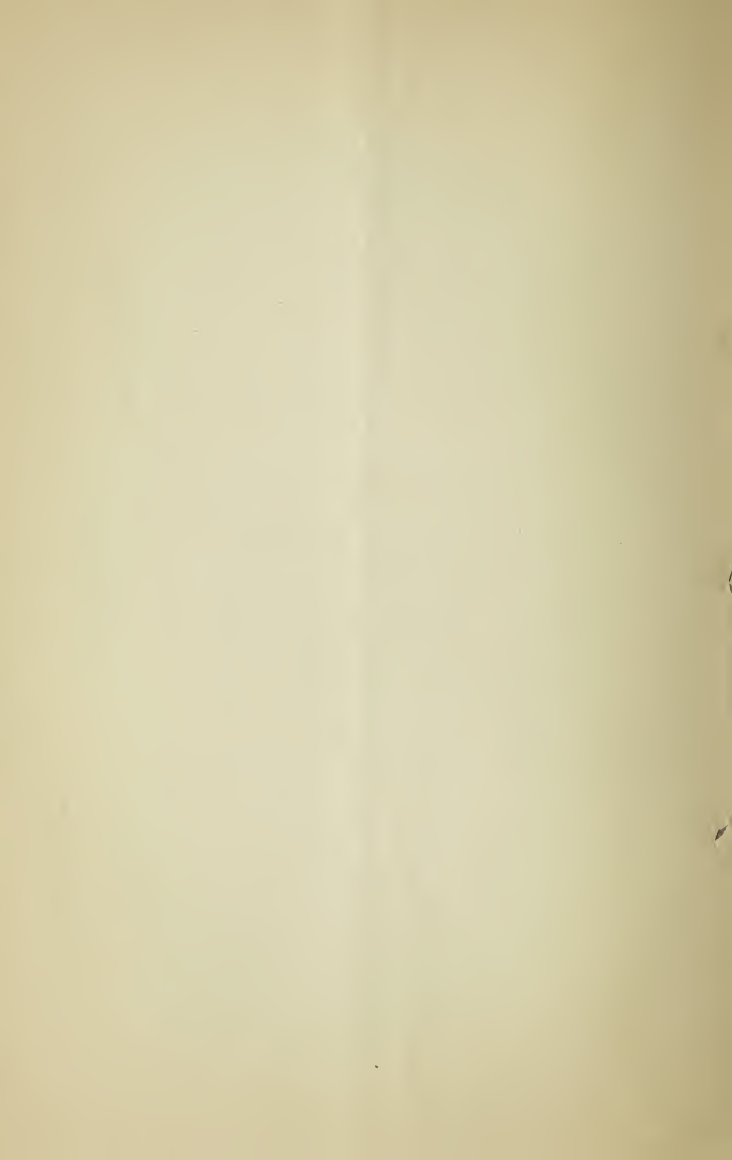
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CAMBRIDGE, June 1st, 1853.

AT the last Convention of the Psi Upsilon Fraternity, held at Schenectady, New York, it was unanimously voted to request for publication the Oration delivered on that occasion by Brother Hooper C. Van Vorst, and the Poem by Brother J. Wade Wilson, and a Committee from the Alpha Chapter was appointed to procure and publish them.

The length of time which elapsed before the receipt of the minutes of the Convention, and the subsequent prolonged absence of two members of the Committee, must be our apology for our delay in the performance of this duty.

It had been our intention to present also some brief obituary notices ; but as replies to the inquiries addressed to the different Chapters had not been received from all of them at the time of publication, it was of course impracticable. We must therefore content ourselves with presenting to the Fraternity the following Oration and Poem, hoping that their perusal will afford to the brethren in general as much entertainment and instruction as it has to the Committee.

CHARLES CARROLL,
JOHN D. BRYANT,
WILLIAM H. ROWE,
BENJAMIN JOY JEFFRIES.



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O R A T I O N .

IN these days, when the attention of the American people is drawn to the revolutions which are occurring among European states,—when our sympathies are awakened by the efforts of the men of other communities in vain attempting at once to change their system of government,—it is well that we should tarry a moment and regard our own organization, and contemplate its capacity for fulfilling the end of its establishment; that we should observe how it has affected the civilization of the old continent, and what part there yet remains for us to act in the great drama now enacting on the world's stage.

We are struck with wonder and amazement when we consider what is transpiring around us; so rapidly do changes take place, not only in the face of nature, but in the condition of the people themselves. Along our extended sea-board, and seated on “broad-armed ports” and harbors, have arisen within a few years

large and magnificent cities, enriched by the fruits of an extensive surrounding agriculture, — rendered populous and powerful by an increasing and skilful system of manufacture, and by a commerce which not only penetrates to the utmost bounds of our own extensive country, but bears off with its powerful wings the products of our own science and labor to distant lands, and returns the choice fabrics and wealth of foreign states.

The progress made by the American people in all the arts which dignify life, and in useful science, the valuable contributions which they have made to literature in the brief space since their establishment as an independent nation, are facts calculated to arrest the attention of the student of History. The condition, wants, and avocations of our people, widely scattered over a broad extent of country, have necessarily characterized our civilization and prominent achievements as practical. The great distance intervening between the States of the North and the South, the broad extent of rapidly filling and yet to be cultivated territory lying between the Atlantic and the Pacific, and the constant interchange of commodities, have necessarily directed the minds of this active people to the discovery, perfection, and application of powers and elements which would facilitate the change of the raw material into the useful article, and expedite as well as cheapen travel and transportation; and hence

the discovery of the wonderful properties of steam, and its almost universal use as a motive power.

By this agency the forests of timber in the Northern States are converted into lumber, borne down the stream upon whose banks they grew, and thence to the utmost limits of California, where they form the dwelling of the new settler. So, too, by this same power, the inexhaustible mineral of Pennsylvania, so necessary for the comfort of man, is exhumed from its deep bed in the mountains, and conveyed to hamlet, village, and city over the entire continent for the use of every citizen; and so, too, the innumerable manufactured articles of the Eastern States, and the rich products of the South, are rapidly interchanged, increasing the wealth and adding to the comforts of all, and binding more strongly the links which unite these States in one whole.

Out of these necessities, and prompted by the demands of this active commercial spirit, have arisen those great works of internal improvement which are the admiration of the world,—the canals and railroads in our State joining the waters of the lakes on our western border with the Hudson River, and indeed the Atlantic Ocean on our southern limit,—and which in the progress of time will eventuate in the completion of that gigantic work of a travelled way from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, through a region now wild, but destined to be the home of a numerous

population ; an undertaking, the claims of which are now urged by its projector with a perseverance destined ultimately to lead to success, and which, when accomplished, will shorten the distance between our land and the Eastern world.

The practicability of this last enterprise will be demonstrated, as the exigencies of society demand its construction. Eastward the commercial spirit of the English nation tends ; there her conquests are made, and then civilization slowly follows in the steps of war and traffic. Westward flows the tide of American civilization and dominion, until the broad waters of the Pacific mark the termination of each.

Although the energies of our people have been chiefly addressed, by the necessities of their situation, to these works, pursuits, and enterprises ; though agriculture, the useful arts, and commerce have flourished and enriched the people ; and though this wealth, devoted principally to the projection and completion of great works and enterprises, is returning with increase all that has been expended, with innumerable comforts and means of happiness ; — still the claims of education, the highest orders of science, and the fine arts, have not been neglected. From the income of the canals, and the surplus revenues which commercial imposts have created, have been fostered in our own and other States a system of education, ennobling and comprehensive, which teaches and trains

for the pursuits of life the children of all our citizens. Libraries are established, high schools and universities are sustained and cherished, by the liberality of the State, and endowed by the wealth of men enriched by manufactures and commercial success. The doors of these institutions are open all around, inviting every one to enter who is desirous of fitting himself for the duties of life in any station, pursuit, or avocation.

The American scholar has done much towards perfecting the language he speaks, and the writers of this country have made valuable contributions to a literature the most refined and elegant the world has yet produced. We have men "skilled in deep philosophy, wit, eloquence, and poetry."

The claims of astronomy, chemistry, and kindred sciences, in this practical age and country, are not overlooked. The names of Mitchell and Henry, and even Agassiz (as America is now the home of his adoption and the theatre of his studies), have shed honor upon the sciences which they investigate.

Could there in our day appear a rational being from some other world, without any knowledge of the previous history of the nations of this globe; could this being make a pilgrimage among all tribes and people, and observe all states and empires; and, having visited the various Eastern nations, — China with her millions of population, Arabia, and Turkey, — thence pass to the continent of Europe, and there survey the condition of

the people, and the state of science and the useful arts ; and having made, too, this tour of observation through France and England, the most advanced of all the old communities, — having properly considered the condition of the masses, the character of the various governments, and the progress made by the most refined and civilized of them all, — could he then pass over to our continent and contemplate the results achieved here ; and should the question then be proposed, “Which is the oldest government on this globe ? What people have been engaged longest in the work of civilization and legislation ?” — we can imagine what would be the reply. It would embody these ideas.

Man, Society, is progressive. Wherever I have travelled over this broad universe, I have found the human mind with all its energies, whether employed for the advantage of the individual or the state, engaged in the same pursuits and striving for the same ends, — improvement, a struggle for the better. With you I find the results of these efforts in the greatest perfection. While others are contending for a free government, you have attained it. Elsewhere are occurring wars and conflicts, which evidently characterize the early history of society. In most states there is ignorance almost universal ; — the useful arts are entirely unknown, or but feebly practised, and inequalities among men are rendered strong by usage or unjust laws. In one place the rich and

powerful, by arbitrary enactments, are enjoying great immunities and privileges; in another, the poor and humble are crushed by the power of the great above them; — always, everywhere, I see the people restless, — hoping, struggling for emancipation. But here, upon this great continent, I find every thing accomplished, or hastening towards perfection. Your government is, without a doubt, the result of great experience and the work of ages; you have passed through, and have become emancipated from, the political and social errors existing elsewhere; centuries have marked the various epochs of your progress. Your laws are humane and wise; with you there are no strifes nor contentions, no restlessness or rebellion; no anxiety for a change in government, but a universal desire to cherish and perfect institutions founded in reason. Here all are equal in the State, — the poor, the rich, — the learned, the unlearned; and, above all, here peace prevails and the arts of peace flourish. Elsewhere society is in its sickly infancy; here it stands forth in the strength of vigorous manhood.

How great would be the surprise of this visitor to our earth, when told that the semi-barbarous Chinese nation is the oldest organization in the world, and has been studying the science of government five thousand years! And in that other Eastern country now covered with hordes of wandering Arabs, without homes or civil institutions, more than four thousand

years ago the wisest sovereign in the universe held sway, and under the guidance of Heaven ruled and promulgated laws; and the sublime truths and precepts of that greater Prince, the Son of God, which have made us the great people we have become, were eighteen hundred years ago divulged, and enforced by his spotless example, in that land where liberty, aye, where civilization, is extinct.

And yet with all these indications of perfection in the science of government, which would seem to have been the results of centuries of experience and development, the American nation is of recent origin. It was only four hundred years ago that the continent itself upon which this people subsists was discovered, and only within two hundred years that the men who planted the foundations of our political fabric first sought these shores. But these men brought to the New World, not the antiquated ideas of the Old, but rather the best civilization of Europe! They brought with them the valued experience which ages of misrule had taught, and were liberated from the political errors exposed in the ill-fated history of states and empires which had fallen, or existed only as a curse to mankind.

The American system commenced at a point far beyond that to which the ripest European civilization had attained, and was advocated by men in whom the principle of self-government was firmly established;

not as an uncertain, vague, or impracticable idea, but as a fixed, determined, living principle. They left the Old World because it afforded neither theatre nor opportunity for its application. There, progress was condemned; there, authority checked the growth of liberal sentiment; the mind was fettered by the strong claims of old prejudice, or startled by the dread of change, in the apprehension that it might tend to reform. The throne was grasping and tenacious of power, and increasing in prerogatives. The wealth, education, and chivalry of the realm, with perseverance and mistaken ideas of self-interest, either aided, or yielded to and readily acquiesced in, the constrained policy of government. There, these men were regarded as enthusiasts dangerous to the public safety,—the disseminators of treason.

But this sentiment of the sovereignty of the people was not of recent growth; its origin could be traced back, far back, to the very commencement of society,—and farther back still,—to the very creation. Man was created free and independent; he recognized no sovereignty save that of the King of Heaven and Earth. The progress of this sentiment was slow; and in the minds of few men only, in the earlier ages, did it find lodgment; but no tyranny or false system of government, however alluring it might be, could obliterate it. It was not to be silenced by honor or power, nor suppressed by the rack, the dungeon, or

the gibbet. It might be, it was, *restrained*,—its growth was retarded, and at times its very existence was scarcely perceptible; for single-handed it was opposed by authority, and wealth, and arms. Yet it was at work silently and efficiently in the minds of men, gaining converts and increasing in strength, trustful, and hoping for ultimate triumph and recognition, even in the theatre of that old civilization; until, from long neglect desponding of success, and wearied by continued and unrelenting persecution, it left the Old World and found shelter among the forests and on the mountains and fertile plains of a new continent, which seemed at the very instant to have been miraculously upheaved from the bosom of the ocean, and garnished for the reception of this people.

This nation is young, but the principle of government is old. The peculiar form of the American system is novel; the elements which give it strength, the source of its confidence and power, its system of representation, legislation, and execution of authority, are ancient, and came into existence when the eye of man first opened to the wondrous light of Heaven, and the law of his Maker was written on his heart. Truth is not of recent origin; truth is not a discovery made by man; it exists independent of him, and by research may be revealed to him. Liberty came not into existence with the formation of the American States. It only found here an abode, an asylum, a

theatre for its reduction to form, and an entrance into the very elements of a human government.

But as we gaze with admiration upon the complete and well-proportioned edifice of this republic, — as we contemplate her illustrious origin and great success, and look forward to her probable destiny, when a hundred millions of inhabitants shall be spread over a country in extent equal to three quarters of all Europe, embracing all climates and yielding every variety of products, — when we contemplate this immense population in the enjoyment of rights in the defence of which their fathers made such sacrifices, and which their far-seeing wisdom secured and established; — is there not mingled with all this a feeling of regret, as the thought naturally reverts to the extinction of that mysterious race who have disappeared before the steps of the white man, — whose primitive manners and wandering and unsettled life have given place to our civilization? Marvel not that they opposed the aggressive steps and irresistible march of the pale stranger, moving onward for the fulfilment of his great mission in the New World. But how unequal the contest, — how feeble a defence were their upraised hands and exposed persons, though as numerous as the leaves of the forests in which they dwelt! The untutored, unexpanded intellect of the native could not understand the justice of the principle by which a stranger claimed his soil. Had he not been born beneath the shade of

the old trees by his side? Had not his ancestors for centuries hunted in security on the same broad prairies, and occupied the same streams? Had not his right of ownership and possession been established by long wars and bloody conflicts with surrounding tribes striving for mastery? And were not the ashes of their renowned chiefs, their wise sages, their fathers, their children, quietly reposing in their burial-places upon the hills and in the valleys? And did they not own those fields upon which each summer's sun for centuries had ripened the golden maize, and which their hands had planted and reaped? Did not a possession which commenced so far back that its very origin was lost or treasured only in uncertain tradition, — did not this give them the right of soil? But these claims and arguments could not melt the white man's heart, change his purpose, or retard his steps. He was forced on by a power he could not himself control, and was engaged in the execution of a great work from which he could not desist; he must advance, though his footsteps should crush the red man's hopes, though his dwelling should rise on the ashes of the wigwam, and his ploughshare level the simple burial-mound of their wise sages and renowned chieftains.

He came, protected by the principles of that code which all civilized nations have adopted, which gave to the discoverer of the territory the right of soil, subject only to the occupancy of the native, to be extin-

guished by purchase or conquest. Nor do we propose to question the correctness of this law. The code of nations, as now settled and universally accepted, is of incalculable benefit to mankind; its provisions are founded in reason, and its justice confirmed by experience. The method of its execution, though at times cruel, is no reproach upon the law itself.

And as the American Indian disappears before the steps of the white man, so will every other people and government on these continents in time yield to the Anglo-American, and the institutions which he has founded. Already in North America her empire is nearly universal. In the French and Mexican territories acquisitions have been made by purchase or conquest, as the spreading population pressed against their confines, and in the wondrous West, including the fertile valley of the Mississippi, — which now embraces more people than the entire population of the Colonies at the time of the war of Independence, — and beyond, towards the Pacific, states are forming which in wealth and strength will soon outstrip the Atlantic and Middle States.

From the day of its organization to the present, the government has gone forward in one uninterrupted career of success. It has been discovered and proved, that the people are safe repositories of the power of the state. With us the chief officers receive their commissions directly from the people: and the ten-

dency of our legislation for years has been, to break up whatever centralization of power remained, and to give back to the primary assembly much that was, from motives of mistaken policy, committed to the executive, the council, or the legislature. The result of all this will render the administration of the legitimate duties of the constituted authorities purer and more in conformity with the best interests of the people. The people determine whether the constitution shall be changed or not, whether they will be taxed or not. In our State they elect the Legislature which frames, the Judiciary which expounds, and the Executive which enforces, the law.

These remarks preclude, as you will perceive, all idea of the dissolution of this Union; the happening of which event has been discussed by some timid or bad men within a few years past. This Union is indissoluble. Its permanence is too deeply identified with the prevalence of the sovereignty of the people, which would receive a fatal wound in such a contingency. The mission of these States clearly indicates their destiny; nor can this mission be fruitless: their union and success go hand in hand.

The Union is stronger this day than it ever has been. The integrity of its organic law is held in deep reverence; and the very slightest suspicion in the minds of the people that any reproach is intended to be cast upon it, or its power questioned, is sufficient to excite

a general sentiment of indignation from one extremity of the land to the other. Among no people is there entertained greater respect for constitutional law and constitutional rights than among the Americans. And there is a universal acquiescence of the public in the determinations of our judicial tribunals, declaring invalid the acts of State Legislatures, and of Congress itself, which in the least degree infringe the provisions of the fundamental law, — it matters not how disastrous such decisions may be to the interest of the individual or the community.

Though the American people now stand secure in the enjoyment of national and social rights, their continued enjoyment of these rights, under Providence, is in their own hands. Nations are no more exempt from the penalties annexed to a violation of moral law, or of those wise enactments which are founded in humanity, than individuals. If the individual offends any, the slightest, moral or physical law, he suffers in his conscience and in his life the severe judgment which follows the breach of these laws: and society, too, avenges herself on the person who violates her law.

The punishments and evils which come on men and nations are the result of efficient causes, — such are the dictates of reason and the decrees of Heaven, — and man cannot, if he would, alter them. If the individual, having the ability, refuses to acknowledge and fulfil an honest and equitable contract, he does so at

the expense of his reputation. If the State repudiates her just debts, she sacrifices her honor. If the individual wrongs his neighbor, he is punished by man and God. If the nation wantonly, and without cause, despoils a sister state, there is a retribution in store for her, and though slow at times in appearing, it is sure to follow. Governments are judged and punished in this world: here only do nations rise and fall.

Let it then be ours to present to the world a government renowned for the wisdom, justice, and humanity of its laws, its respect for the rights of others, and its firm and patriotic defence of its own, and distinguished for its intelligence and virtue. Forget not that the nation is composed of men, — that it has no distinct and separate being. *You* are a part of the nation; — “The people are the State.” Always, and in every emergency, be it yours to stand up in vindication of the Constitution, and the laws which have its sanction.

In a monarchy, the patriotism of the subjects centres in the king; their idea of power and protection and national glory goes back to the stability of the throne, with its vast prerogatives and the great wealth and force which it controls. *We* recognize no such power or pride; our conception of security, of strength and perpetuity, should resolve itself in the Constitution and the laws; for these are the voice of the people and the will of the State, expressed in the most

legitimate form, and, until changed, they are the supreme power here,—they constitute the defence of the nation against intestinal feuds, and are the origin of its ability to resist attacks from without.

Weaken, then, by no act of yours their authority or strength, but in all your acts encourage love and respect for them. The Constitution is each man's guardian angel; its invisible and ever-attending power protects him in the enjoyment of all his rights, of property, person, and liberty; and though convulsions may shake society, though bands of excited men should arise and threaten the destruction of all you hold dear, though they may attempt by physical might to overpower the weak in this emergency,—although you fear, still despair not, for your guardian angel is at hand with her avenging sword. It is then your country calls on the good and valiant for countenance and aid, and with their assistance amid the fierce tumult the law will work on silently and efficiently, will vindicate itself and cover you with her impenetrable shield from all attacks.

The Union, I repeat, is strong! both from the love which the people entertain for it, and for the interests which its perpetuity guarantees. And there is a Power, too, beyond all human control, and unmoved by the short-sightedness of man's intellect or passion; a Power by whose permission, and under whose guidance, it was formed, and which will protect and bind it more

strongly together, and by its instrumentality work out great ends.

Such is the condition of our country, such is the advance we have made in the arts, sciences, agriculture, and commerce. We stand this day in the enjoyment of perfect liberty, guaranteed and secured to us by our liberal institutions, whose foundations were laid deep and firm by our fathers, and which no attacks from abroad, or contending interests or strife within, have been able in the least to weaken.

But is our work complete? Has the principle of Freedom spent itself in the accomplishment of its greatest work on these Western shores? Is justice partial? Is there any thing in the American people which renders them the especial favorites of Heaven; or destined alone, though they may spread over this entire continent and be limited only by the surrounding ocean, to this fruition of the elements of political and social happiness? The world,—the entire world,—over man wherever he exists on this globe,—on the continent, the peninsula, the island of the sea,—in the frozen North, where humanity barely subsists, and in the glorious South,—in the East, where old civilization with trembling hand and relaxing grasp still maintains her feeble hold, and in Europe, in the midst of her down-trodden millions,—everywhere will Freedom unfurl her spotless banner, and all men rest in security beneath its broad folds.

Europe is now the point to which our eyes are directed, and in which our hopes centre. True, she expelled our fathers from her bosom ages ago. True, she offered no secure asylum; she opened no field for the expansion of the principles of government which are diffused throughout every part of our system. True, we have surpassed her in every great and noble work; we have outstripped her with all her experience, — with all the wisdom of her great writers and teachers, — with all her science, — with all her art, her commerce, her wealth; we have left her behind in the swaddling-bands of infancy, while we stand erect in the strength of manhood. But let us not forget the source from which we sprang, — the rock out of which we were hewn; and however unnatural and cold she may have been, let us not forget the mother of the American citizen.

Europe is destined to learn a great lesson from the grand experiment wrought among us. She has watched us in amazement as we have made rapid, gigantic strides to greatness, compared with her feeble steps. Her march is impeded, ours is free. There are a thousand encumbrances and weights which hinder her, — there are old customs, usages, laws, and prerogatives, which so bear down and retard her, that her progress is like that of some noble vessel sunk nearly to the water's edge with merchandise, urged by its worn-out crew, without wind, against the

tide ; — and this, too, while no officer nor pilot gives a word of encouragement to cheer the fainting spirit of the toiling mariners, or suffers any useless burden which encumbers her movements to be cast into the ocean.

The whole power of wealth, the cabinets, courts, and statesmen of Europe, exercise all their great influence to check the movement of Freedom. Does the press speak, — the decree of the court, enforced by the bayonet, silences her voice. Do liberal-minded men utter a word in favor of the people's rights, — exile or a dungeon is their fate.

Still, the powerful pamphlet anonymously issued is working in silence revolutions and changes ; and travellers from these States, all over the Continent, are spreading liberal sentiments, and every mail-packet which crosses the broad Atlantic bears from the emigrant settled in our fertile valleys messages of hope and encouragement. The son writes to his father, the sister to her brother, and friend to friend ; all tell of the blessings enjoyed by man in a country of freedom. Freighted with great truths and bright experiences are these mail-vessels, and the simple yet truthful language of these letters is a more effective agent than great speeches or an ill-timed rebellion.

Be not discouraged that you do not see great changes or progress taking place in Europe. From the causes to which allusion has been made, the ad-

vance is destined to be slow, as it is now imperceptible. The element, although unseen, is at work. The hours do pass, although your vision is wearied as you endeavor to note the progress of the hand upon the dial-plate; and that largely freighted vessel does feel the influence of some occasional wind, as the anxious sailors have spread all canvas to catch the slightest breeze.

It is during the continuance of violent revolutions that thrones are upturned and great political changes effected in the institutions of the country; it is only when the troubled waters subside that the havoc which has been made is disclosed. The peaceful action of the ocean does, unnoticed, wear away the firm rocks which stand sublime upon its shores; it is only when lashed into anger by the storm, that its uplifted waves dash against the overhanging cliff, which, yielding to the stroke, is buried beneath the foaming surge.

But has there not been some perceptible progress made in Europe since the foundation of this government? In truth, man is more free; despotism is not so absolute, and her encroachments are met by noble men. Poland has been blotted out of political existence, but her fall was only accomplished by the slaughter of thousands, tens of thousands, of her people. And Hungary too, — ill-fated Hungary, — in our day, and under our own eyes, only yielded when the unholy alliance of despots brought into the field forces

against which it was in vain longer to struggle. But though Poland has fallen, and Hungary has yielded, is Liberty dead? Ah no! the man may die, but the principles he cherished and the lessons he inculcated will live. Both Hungary and Poland have, by their resistance, their patriotic devotion, although unsuccessful, done inestimable service to the cause of enlightened freedom.

The people who willingly and unresistingly yield their necks to the yoke of tyranny deserve no sympathy, and never accomplish much for their own amelioration. But Hungary can never be effectually conquered; the day of liberation is as sure to come as the morrow's sun to rise. She arose in vindication of truth. Her foe was too powerful, and after great sacrifice she was overcome, her soldiers were cut down, her armies perished, her generals and statesmen were exiled. Who thinks that the principle that originated this movement, and which has sustained it, was destroyed? Encouraged by the generous sympathy of the friends of liberty, in the cessation of strife it will take deeper root, grow, expand, and ultimately prevail.

And has not this revolution discovered to the world, as all revolutions do, men of firmness, integrity, and great intellectual power, who ennoble the age in which they live, and give an impulse to the cause in which they have enlisted? These men have not ori-

ginated the sentiment or spirit of the revolution ; — they are only the embodiment of it, and by its power are thrown above their fellows, and stand forth its great champions, and by common consent speak for it ; and as in the times of our own Revolutionary struggles there were found men in all respects equal to the great occasion, so the revolutionary spirit of Europe has discovered great master-spirits. These men, whose stirring words are exciting the public mind, have not spoken new truths, but old maxims ; they have but applied the fire which will kindle throughout all Europe the slumbering embers of Liberty. Despair not, then, that you do not see immediate results ; they will come before you are aware of the existence of the cause which will produce them. The elements are now at work ; you will not perceive them except you examine closely the relations of things.

The movement of the wing of a bird has sent from its great elevation, on the summit of the highest Alps, the avalanche of snow which had been gathering there for ages. How simple the cause, how terrible the result, in the destruction of the unsuspecting travellers, who, winding their way among the frozen passes of the mountains, were overwhelmed in the awful catastrophe ! And there are causes now at work in the Old World, which will eventually sweep from the earth the last remnant of despotism, now invested with all the symbols of pride and pomp, and

enriched by the spoil of an oppressed people. Far from secure are the foundations of their power; for there are raging beneath their feet the pent-up furies which misrule and tyranny have kindled, and their thrones rest insecurely upon the bursting crater of a volcano.

There are those who confess to a feeling of regret at the successful termination of the *coup d'état* of the unscrupulous despot who now directs the affairs of France, — who regard the seeming security of his power, and the acquiescence therein by the people, as hindering the progress of European liberty. They know not France who thus judge, nor have they faithfully read the records of the past. No people, governed as the French nation have been, ever, at one stride, stepped from monarchy to settled, well-matured republicanism.

“ A thousand years scarce seem to form a state,
An hour may lay it in the dust.”

The unsettled state of affairs at the termination of the power of the last French king, followed as it was by a provisional government of great talent but no energy, rendered the rise of the present ruler of France inevitable. Even a *bad* government is better than *no* government; and the dread of insecurity and anarchy forces the people who pant for repose and security in their property, their persons, and their homes, to tolerate his unjustifiable assumption of power, though

upraised on the broken elements of their constitution. The grasping ambition of the man, exciting his great determination and energy, fortifying all the citadels of his power, seems to them the pledge of their security. Yet though his government should continue, every year will show this power abridged, and this despotism relaxed; maintained as it is by the prestige of a mere name, and unfelt amid pageants and views and the excitement of reviving trade and art.

Yet is not this despotism undermining the foundations of its own strength? Does not every act of intolerance, every persecution of opinion, every exile of the great and good, recall the minds of the unwilling subjects to the magnitude of the power which is settling upon them and threatening to crush them? Are not its aggressions and assumptions dispelling the glare of the heartless pomp and parade which has dazzled them? And will they not look with contempt upon the senate and assemblies and ministers by whom he is surrounded, whose servile adhesion to the government displays itself in a legislation intended to strengthen his ill-gotten authority, and to employ the revenue extorted from trade and commerce to enrich the court or corrupt the people?

Without the fame of great services to his country, — without the confidence which statesmanship begets, — this prince has attained, by a sudden, bold, and bloody step, which held his people, wearied by misrule, in

awe and astonishment, a power, the destruction of which is as certain as was the dismemberment of the gigantic empire which a greater Napoleon established, and as sudden and complete as was the overthrow of that Eastern king whose downfall was foretold and accomplished in the same hour; — for while yet in the midst of his impious feast, and rejoicing in the seeming security of his reign, Belshazzar the king was slain, and Darius the Median took the kingdom.

The throne of the Supreme Governor of the world is seated high in the heavens, above all human powers, and his unwearied eye runs to and fro throughout all this earth. *He* raises and overthrows nations. Without His assent, kingdoms and men are alike powerless. Think not for an instant that there is any such thing as chance. The well-matured plans and purposes of Infinite Wisdom are discoverable in the rise, progress, prosperity, and downfall of nations. Not more regularly do the golden worlds above us, shining through illimitable space, obey the laws of their system, and move in their well-defined orbits, than do the governments of this world answer and fulfil the design of the Supreme Ruler.

And what though great nations, whose empire was commensurate with the world, have passed away! Have not new and better states arisen? What though great orbs which shone forth when the stars sung together on the morning of the creation, and which

have illumined their pathway through the heavens for ages, have become extinct! Have not new and brilliant planets emerged from the darkness which their void has made, and poured their newly created light upon us even in our day?

This Infinite Power will not interpose, by any miraculous display, to arrest the career of wickedness and crime in which governments indulge, as He does not so restrain the folly of the individual. His *religion* even, so distasteful to the heart of man, He does not compel him to embrace, nor does He make converts by the sword. Yet the whole world must bow to the peaceful sceptre of the Child born in a manger in Bethlehem. How simple the means in use to establish this dispensation! Uneducated fishermen were its first heralds, and peaceful men are now its advocates, and are bearing the standard of the cross to every nation, tribe, and tongue, before whose words hoary superstition and old religions are passing away.

Now what is the part that America is to take in this struggle? She has in fact taken her position. She has exhibited to the world what a people can accomplish when armed in the cause of Liberty against their oppressor; and she is now teaching, by the stability of her institutions and the happiness of her people, how preferable is a free government to monarchical institutions.

It was not an immature rebellion, — it was not

simply a desire of change regardless of consequences, — which awakened that revolution which resulted in the establishment of these States. The right of a people to array themselves in opposition to the constituted authorities in certain cases, and indeed to overthrow the government itself, is thus recognized in their Declaration of Independence: —

“Prudence indeed will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes: and accordingly, all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security.”

Such is the sentiment of this people, promulgated in 1776, and such is the position this government is understood to have taken with regard to other nations who have in a successful revolution achieved their independence. The far-seeing wisdom of the founders of this republic anticipated the evils which would flow from an active participation in the affairs of Europe.

Our mission is a pacific one. What we do as a nation, for the progress of liberty throughout the world, should be done by example and judicious legis-

lation. The people can accomplish much by obedience to the laws, and by thus exhibiting to the world that the greatest amount of political freedom and social equality does not lead to lawlessness or instability. Far more do these lessons tend to the amelioration of Europe, than though we should send fleets and armies to batter down the intrenchments of despotism.

Fellow-members of the Fraternity, the posture of affairs at this time has necessarily led to this train of remarks the mind of the person selected to address you on this occasion. He knew of no subject, the consideration of which could be more profitable to you. How forcibly it addresses itself to your attention! What cannot this body of men assembled here this day accomplish? What cannot the members of this Fraternity effect in this country? You are here from every portion of our country, representatives of all its professions and pursuits, having enjoyed its choicest education. Many of you are already struggling with the stern realities of life,—have gained success and reputation in the world, and a generous ambition urges you forward to greater honors. Others of you are now ready for the world; standing as it were upon its threshold, anxious to meet and conquer its difficulties. Go forward! delay not,—time presses. You carry with you the best wishes of the good and generous everywhere.

You are reapers, just about to enter the domain of thought and action, and with a keen sickle and unflagging toil you will gather full sheaves,—while behind you are pressing on the ranks of the gleaners, who will be enriched by what you in your haste will leave; for the fields are fertile and abundant, and white for the harvest.

But oh! in your anxieties for yourselves, forget not your country,—forget not her welfare, her honor, her mission; do all in your power to elevate her character. Next to your God let your affections embrace this government, the best which the world has yet seen, the success of which will bless millions yet unborn. Have some of the devotion of that Jewish king to whom his country was more dear than the apple of his eye, and who would rather relinquish the cunning of his right hand than forget the Holy City, the seat of his empire.

The part to be assumed by you in the struggle of opinion here upon this continent is clear and manifest, and I make no doubt that your position has already been defined. We find no apologists for absolutism here,—no friend of ignorance or tyranny,—no one who would attempt to arrest the current of enlightened civilization, but rather willing to trust his bark on the flowing tide. You go for freedom against oppression, and of the great contest which is going on in the Old World, where man is struggling with bondage, where

the people are opposed to the crown, you are not indifferent spectators. Your sympathies are with the downtrodden. Your voice will never be heard advocating error, although venerable from age and fortified by power and wealth.

You remember how the students in the European universities left their halls of science and the peaceful shades of academic life,—how the lawyer deserted the courts, the medical man his lectures,—for the troubles and deprivations of the camp, and fell in the foremost ranks in the attempt to rescue their country from the power of the spoiler.

Your influence will go where your generous impulses lead; and although you are not called to the battle-field, nor summoned to mingle in the strife of arms, while, as good citizens of your country, you do all in your power to elevate her character,—to make her great, humane, just,—you will also hasten by your advocacy the political millennium which ere-long will pervade the entire globe, whose dawning is now perceptible amid the departing darkness which hangs over Europe.

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